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COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

STATE CORPORATION COMMISSION

AT RICHMOND, FEBRUARY 12, 1999

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA, ex rel.

STATE CORPORATION COMMISSION

Ex Parte: In re: Investigation of CASE NO. PUC960161
area code relief for the 703 code
of Northern Virginia

ORDER ON INTERIM REPORT OF DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS

On November 7, 1997, the Commission issued an Order in the above captioned investigation which provided in part that the Staff should conduct an investigation of number conservation plans which might delay implementing area code relief for area code 703. On June 23, 1998, the Commission issued an Order granting the Commission's Staff an extension of time through December 31, 1998, within which to file a report on its investigation of number conservation plans for area code 703. The North American Numbering Council ("NANC") filed its report on exhaustion of area codes on October 21, 1998. Subsequently, the Commission issued its Order on Area Code Relief on November 23, 1998, directing that an area code overlay be implemented for the 703 area.

On December 29, 1998, the Commission's Staff filed its Interim Report of Division of Communications ("Interim Report").

The Interim Report noted the following developments concerning number conservation measures:

On October 21, 1998, NANC submitted a report to the Federal Communications Commission ("FCC") entitled "Number Resource Optimization Working Group Modified Report to the North American Numbering Council on Number Optimization Methods" (NANC Report). NANC provided this report in response to a request from the FCC.

On November 6, 1998, the FCC issued a public notice seeking comments on the NANC Report. Interested parties were given until December 21, 1998, to file their comments.

The Commission Staff filed its comments on December 17, 1998, requesting the FCC to expedite the implementation of thousands-block pooling.

On December 16, 1998, the North American Numbering Plan Administrator (NANPA) declared Extraordinary Jeopardy for the 703 area code. NANPA will hold telecommunications industry meetings in January 1999 to discuss code conservation measures for the remaining 703 central office codes.

The Interim Report notes that the NANC Report identifies fourteen measures that could possibly be used to optimize the use of telecommunications numbering resources. Two of the most promising measures identified by this Commission's Staff are thousands-block pooling and rate center consolidation. The Staff's comments and recommendations on these two measures are restated as follows:

Staff Report

We are hopeful that the FCC will adopt national guidelines for thousands-block pooling in the near future. Recognizing this, it is prudent at this time to prepare for the implementation of pooling.

Code holders in the 703 area may have vacant as well as contaminated thousand-blocks that could be set aside in a "holding" category within their administrative systems. Industry guidelines define contaminated blocks as 1000 blocks that have 10% or less subscriber number assignment. Qualifying blocks could be returned once a mechanism is in place for national thousands-block pooling.

Rate center consolidation serves to lessen the demand for central office (C.O.) codes by reducing rating areas within an area code. Carriers who plan to provide telephone service throughout the geographic area served by a particular code would need fewer C.O. codes to serve their customers.

Conclusion

The Staff recommends that the Commission seek comments from the industry on the merits of thousands-block pooling and rate center consolidation as possible number conservation measures for the 703 area. The Staff requests that central office code holders should be ordered to state their willingness to hold vacant and contaminated thousand-blocks for possible return to the numbering pool.

With regard to the possible return of vacant central office codes to the numbering pool, the Commission concludes that this number conservation measure would include all codes issued prior to the NANPA Code Administrator's declaration of Extraordinary Jeopardy for the 703 NPA in Virginia.

The Commission accepts the recommendations of Staff as modified above and finds that all central office code holders should respond to the following: a) the return of vacant central office codes to the numbering pool; b) holding vacant and contaminated thousand-blocks for possible return to the numbering pool; and c) the consolidation of rate centers. The Commission finds that these responses and comments should be filed no later than March 31, 1999, with the Clerk of the State Corporation Commission, c/o Document Control Center, P.O. Box 2118, Richmond, Virginia 23218. The responses and comments should refer to Case No. PUC960161.

Accordingly, IT IS ORDERED THAT:

(1) All providers of telecommunications services to the 703 NPA area in Virginia presently holding central office codes are hereby directed to file their responses consistent with the findings above.